

Postcards from Iraq

May 13, 2007

Somewhere between Iraq and St. Paul...

Mark,

I thought I'd take a few moments while I'm waiting to re-deploy to give you and the GRN PAO, LuAnne Fantasia, a bit of an update on my pre-deployment site survey.

It's been a very busy and encouraging 10 days of visiting our Corps employees in this area of Iraq, learning about their daily challenges and successes, as well as seeing the positive effects of their construction projects on the country. The employees' insights have already made this the best transition into new duties and responsibilities in my Army career.

I've seen again, how effective a dedicated employee team of uniformed Army, DA Civilian, contractor, and local/third country nationals can be in making a difference in the lives of the local people - in this case - Iraqis and each other - every day that they come to work.

As it is elsewhere in the Corps of Engineers, our customers' (both Iraqi and US military forces) needs, their understanding of our capabilities, and our consistent delivery of quality projects on-time, within budget, and to standard remains critical to our mission success. While that project delivery in this area of Iraq presents unique challenges and opportunities only really understood by those who've served here, the continuing passion, positive attitude, and commitment demonstrated by the employees here is nothing short of inspirational.

I look forward to joining this high performing team and continuing its legacy. This mission success is sustained by excellent life support near the district headquarters, sleeping trailers w/showers, AC, hot and cold water, a super dining facility nearby, a decent PX, and excellent workout facilities. Finally there is a very well-trained and professional contract security detail to protect us during required ground travel outside the camp.

I look forward to returning to you and the St. Paul team, soon.

MICHAEL F. PFENNING
Cdr, St. Paul Engineer District



(left) COL Michael Pfenning and COL Frederick Wolf view the Erbil, Iraq Ministry of Interior building after it was hit by an VBIED this week.